

royalty of ten per cent, or thirty centimes,¹
for every
copy sold. As, however, only fifteen hundred
copies were
printed, the sale of the entire edition
represented less than
twenty pounds² for the author; and it so
happened that
the book was not reissued till 1880.

From this it might be inferred that it proved
an absolute
failure; but such was hardly the case.
Certainly it was not
a perfect book. Zola himself afterwards wrote
that the
observer occasionally vanished from its pages,
allowing the
poet to appear, a poet who had drunk too
much milk and
eaten too much sugar. "It was not," said he,
"a virile
work; it was the cry of a weeping, rebellious
child." But
with all its faults it bore the impress of
sincerity; Daudet's
" Sapho," though far superior as literature,
leaves one cold
when one turns to it after perusing Zola's
feverish pages.
If the public did not rush to buy the
"Confession," the
critics, at all events, paid it considerable
attention, and
several assailed it unmercifully. For instance,
Barbey
d'AureVilly, writing in the " Nain Jaune,"
declared that its
" hero " was a toad, and that the author had
simply spun
out, over three hundred and twenty pages, what
Cambronne,
who commanded the Old Guard at Waterloo,
had expressed
in a single word. But what particularly
roused Zola's ire

was that "le Catholique hyste"rique," as he subsequently nicknamed Barbey d'Aurdvilly, maliciously referred to the " Confession " as " Hachette's little book," whereas that firm had nothing to do with it. Zola therefore addressed a letter of protest to the " Nain Jaune." ⁸

¹ About 3*d.*; or six cents (American).

² Say \$100.

⁸ R. H. Sherard's "Emile Zola: A Biographical and Critical Study." London, 1895, pp. 52, 53.